

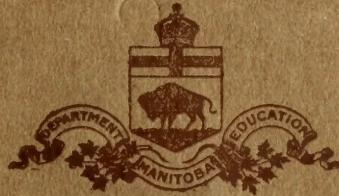
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CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN MANITOBA



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December, 1910

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The Ontario Institute
for Studies in Education

Toronto, Canada





Consolidation of Rural Schools in Manitoba

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

G. R. COLDWELL

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

WINNIPEG, MAN.

**THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION**

DECEMBER, 1910



Consolidated Schools

The Agricultural College of the University of Illinois collected and published data *re* consolidation in 1904 at the request of the Illinois Farmers' Institute; and E. Davenport, Dean of the College of Agriculture, writes as follows in the preface to the first edition of the bulletin:

"Letters were sent to all the States of the Union asking what had been done, if anything, and how it had succeeded. Opinions were collected both from professional educators and from farmers who had experienced the workings of the system, all from sources the most diverse. Aside from this, a trusted agent of the institution visited the region in Ohio where the system had been longest in use, with instructions to note all the conditions found both favorable and unfavorable.

"The investigation was begun and conducted without bias or previously formed impressions as to the merits or demerits, advantages or disadvantages, of this method of administering the school system. As the investigation proceeded, however, the conviction that is inevitable to anyone who really studies this question gradually forced itself upon the consciousness and, in spite of efforts to the contrary, the reader will detect its presence in the mind of the writer at the time of putting the data in final form.

"It is therefore the more necessary to assure the reader that this conviction arose during and by virtue of this investigation, and that it did not exist in advance; indeed, there was no opportunity for pre-existing opinions, because the writer had never before given the slightest attention to the details of the subject."

In the preface to the second edition, he says:

"In the further study of this subject in its application to Illinois, there has quite unexpectedly come to the surface the surprising fact that in spite of all the arguments as to the impossibility of transporting pupils over "bad roads," the facts are that they are being transported now in large numbers, and have been for years all over the State, often travelling as far as seven miles and back daily during a high school course. True, it is being done at private expense and often for several members of the same family. But it is done, and many vehicles follow each other daily at all seasons and in all kinds of weather over all the roads of the State leading to high schools, and it is well within the facts to state that without a doubt *more horses are actually employed in Illinois today in transporting the older children to village high schools, and more miles are travelled than would be necessary to transport all the children to central schools if the horses were coupled together and hitched to proper vehicles.*

"And so it is that the farmer not only supports his own school system, but because it is insufficient he also helps to support that of his city neighbors. Thus he supports a double system of schools, one at public expense and another at private cost; and the *transportation that is inevitable under any system that will provide good schools for country children of high school age*, he manages in the most costly and inconvenient manner that could be devised.

"The question of country high schools for country children is the largest issue before the farmers today. The conspicuous lack of these schools is the weakest spot in the agricultural development of the American people, and upon their solution of this matter largely depends the future of the agricultural masses.

"What agriculture needs now more than any other thing is a system of schools that educates country people as successfully as city schools educate city people; a system that trains for life and fits for college without destroying the home or taking the child out of the influence of the favorable conditions under which he was born.

"Good country schools cannot be established within walking distance of each other. Transportation is inherent in any effective system and it is inevitable. It will surely go forward. It is only a question of time and manner. The largest element of doubt and danger now is as to what sort of schools we shall have after consolidation.

"Consolidated country schools do not mean annihilated country schools with the children hauled away to the nearest city to be schooled on the wholesale plan. The thing that should come out of this is a real country school for country children, and whether it is located in a small village, at a crossing of the roads, or in some picturesque piece of woodland, it must breathe the atmosphere of country life; it must instil a love for country things, and it must teach in terms of a life that the country child understands.

"The chief concern now is that when consolidation comes, as it surely will, it may result in a system of real country schools doing both elementary and high school work for country children, serving them acceptably until they are old enough to go to college, when—and not before—they may well sleep under another than a father's roof and eat at another than a father's table.

"In pioneer times, when population was scattered and before men had commenced to gather much in cities, most of the schools were country schools. These were generally taught by men. The teacher was sometimes ignorant, it is true, but more often the 'dominie' was the local preacher, and very frequently indeed he was a college student bringing the then learning of the world to the common school, where by personal contact, individual influence and the enthusiasm of youth he became a veritable inspiration. In this way many a statesman, jurist and journalist made his first impression on some country school, taught during vacation to eke out expenses.

"Now all this is changed. With the development of the times and the diversification of industries, the proportion of the people living in cities has vastly increased, as it must and should, and at these centres

of population schools have been established the like of which had no existence in pioneer times. These schools have been graded and developed almost to the extent of becoming small colleges; indeed, in the west the city high school, which prepares for college as well as for life, has almost completely prevented the coming in of the old-fashioned academy.

"Meantime the country school has not developed. Speaking relatively, if not absolutely, it has gone backward, because the old-time 'good teacher' has gone to the city and the old-time 'good scholar' has followed him, often taking the family and their interests along with them, never to return, all operating to sap the vitality of the country school, not only as to attendance but as to personal interest and financial support as well. Thinking men have long since discovered that if this emigration to the cities for higher education is to continue, the country as well as its schools will be sapped of its vitality, and this thought has taken form in the expression that 'the country child is entitled to as good educational privileges as the city child, and this too without breaking up the family home,' and that anything short of this is unfair to the child and unprofitable to the community."

SIZE AND COST OF COUNTRY SCHOOLS

During the year 1909 there were fifty-five districts that operated schools with an enrolment of ten or less, the total average being 285.66 or 5.19 per school. These districts spent \$40,344.90, which means that the education, such as it was, cost \$141.23 per child, based on the average attendance, which is the only basis on which to judge of the return the school is making its ratepayers for the money invested.

There were 147 districts with an enrolment ranging from eleven to fifteen, and their total average attendance was 1,061.51 or 7.22 per district. These schools cost \$108,959.86 or \$102.64 per pupil, according to the average attendance.

During the same year 205 districts operated with an enrolment ranging from sixteen to twenty, the total average attendance being 1,923.89 or 9.38 per district, and the total cost was \$167,295.30 or \$86.95 per pupil.

There were also 222 districts in which the enrolment was from twenty-one to twenty-five, and their total average attendance was 2,510.40 or 11.3 per school. These were operated at a cost of \$198,-813.77 or \$79.20 per pupil.

The following figures furnish further evidence that many of our

schools are too small. There were two schools operated with an average attendance for the year of *two or less*; six with an average *between two and three*; thirteen with an average *between three and four*; thirty-five with an average *between four and five*; thirty-nine with an average *between five and six*; and seventy-four with an average *between six and seven*.

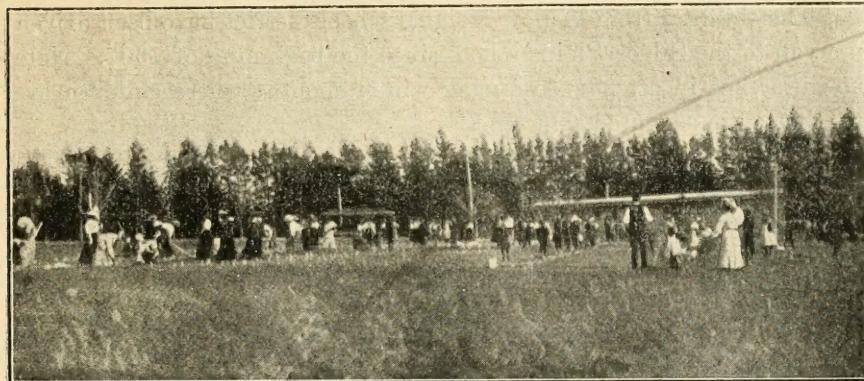
In marked contrast with these figures are those of the City of Winnipeg, where the cost per pupil was \$33.56, and this included a full collegiate and commercial course, together with manual training and domestic science for the children in the grades, and school buildings as fine and as complete as any in Canada. Take also Virden, where the children have the advantage of a collegiate institute. Here the average cost was \$37 per pupil, and the children living in the country were provided with transportation, this being a consolidated school district.

From this it will appear that many rural schools are costing from three to four times as much to operate as the town and city schools; and it is not possible to estimate the amount the farmers are paying annually in addition for tuition, board and other expenses of their children, who as non-residents, seek a high school education in the cities, towns and villages.

Commenting on a similar condition of affairs in Indiana, the township trustees of Tippecanoe County say: "There is but one remedy and that is to collect the pupils together into larger groups by means of transportation."

Comparative statement of attendance from the school districts of Willow Heights and Silver Plains during the year 1909:

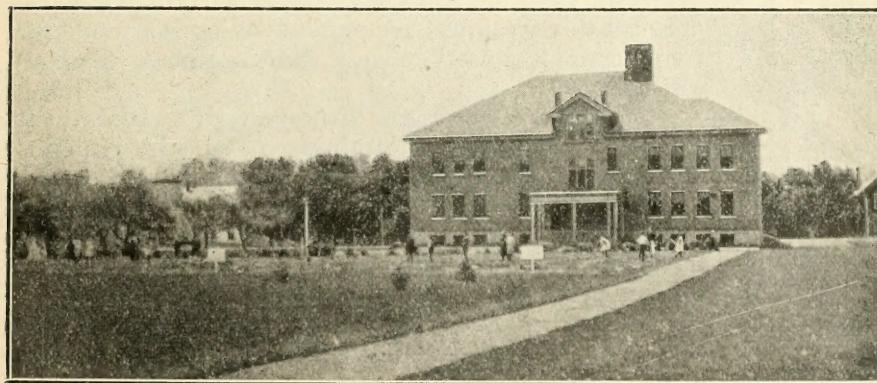
	Willow Heights			Silver Plains		
	Enrolled	Average	P.C.	Enrolled	Average	P.C.
January . . .	10 ..	8.73 ..	87.3	20 ..	9.31 ..	46.50
February . .	10 ..	9.52 ..	95.2	21 ..	15.00 ..	71.4
March . . .	11 ..	10.04 ..	91.2	18 ..	13.55 ..	75.3
April. . . .	12 ..	10.12 ..	84.3	18 ..	14.06 ..	78.1
May. . . .	13 ..	11.15 ..	85.8	18 ..	15.15 ..	84.1
June. . . .	12 ..	9.61 ..	80.1	18 ..	15.47 ..	85.9
August . . .	11 ..	8.94 ..	81.2	16 ..	11.88 ..	74.2
September . .	11 ..	6.47 ..	58.8	16 ..	10.23 ..	63.9
October. . .	10 ..	8.36 ..	83.6	16 ..	12.52 ..	78.2
November . .	10 ..	8.13 ..	81.3	17 ..	13.50 ..	79.4
December. . .	12 ..	9.53 ..	79.4	18 ..	7.53 ..	41.8



MACDONALD SCHOOL, GUELPH, ONT.—TEACHERS RECEIVING INSTRUCTION IN
SCHOOL GARDEN WORK



COUNTRY TEACHERS AND PUPILS VISITING THE SCHOOL GARDENS AT THE
MACDONALD SCHOOL, GUELPH, ONT.



CHILDREN ENGAGED IN GARDENING—MACDONALD SCHOOL, GUELPH, ONT.

The children from Willow Heights school district have been driven in a van to the Silver Plains school since the beginning of 1907. Note the difference in attendance during winter months where children are transported in a comfortable van.

The two districts combined furnished a fair enrolment and average attendance, and as a result the trustees have been able to retain the services of the same teacher for a number of years. Mr. Robert C. Marsh, a teacher with second-class professional standing, has taught at Silver Plains since July, 1906.

VIRDEN, January 31st, 1910.

HON. G. R. COLDWELL,

Minister of Education, Winnipeg.

Sir,—I have the honor to present the following report on Consolidation of Schools:

The chief educational problem which confronts us in Manitoba, indeed, in all Canada, today is the problem of the rural school.

Numbers of men are willing to devote their lives to work in the dome of the educational edifice. When university chairs are vacant, there is no lack of suitable men to fill them, and university professors seldom die and never resign. Technical schools, whether of agriculture, medicine, pharmacy or education, whose students are equipped for the earning of immediate dividends, pay suitable salaries to capable instructors, and seem to have little difficulty in retaining their services. Secondary schools generally, and city elementary systems, are well staffed with professional teachers, while the general rise in salaries has done much to hold good men. But we have in Manitoba today nearly thirteen hundred one-roomed rural schools, and trudging along country roads to attend them are more than thirty thousand children. What is being done for this great army of pupils? What can we do for them? For they deserve an education every whit as good as the boys and girls of town or city.

Like Topsy, the country school has "just growed." Hitherto it has owed little to programme maker or training school. Its problems are in a great measure foreign to the city where training schools are located and where programme makers usually reside, and it has, for the most part, been left to work out these problems as best it could. The solutions arrived at leave much to be desired.

Looming large in every rural school is the problem of organization. One teacher must teach all grades. The College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois was requested by the farmers of that State to make an inquiry into the condition of rural education—a condition by no

means good—and it was the finding of the commission: "That there was a minimum of efficiency below which a school cannot be a good school, and that that minimum for a mixed population of all ages was two teachers, two rooms, and thirty or forty pupils." A larger school will give a better grading, but this minimum is the country child's right. How is he to obtain it?

Forty years ago the rural school problem confronted the people of Massachusetts. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to unite three or four small districts, build a central school, and transport the children. The plan was a new one, and met with ridicule and abuse. Parents who had cheerfully permitted children to trudge two or three miles through mud and slush were fearful of the discomforts of a van. Their fears were not lessened by their increased tax bills. There was a loss of local control, and of the divine right of the single kicker to drive a good teacher from the district. But slowly the idea made its way. The children liked it; they had a better time at school, they attended regularly, they made progress. As early as 1893 Superintendent Rockwell was able to write: "For eighteen years we have had the best attendance from transported children; no more sickness among them and no accidents. The children like the plan exceedingly." From Massachusetts the idea spread westward, and now consolidation is in successful operation in more than twenty States.

In Canada the movement has not been spontaneous. The beginning was made by Professor Robertson, who was acting as adviser to Sir William Macdonald. Professor Robertson had been struck by the excellent results obtained in the various States where the scheme had been tried out, and in 1902 an offer was made to Middleton, N.S., and Kingston, N.B., whereby all excess of taxation over that entailed by the old system was to be paid for three years out of the Macdonald trust. The offer, after some hesitation, was accepted, and the schools were built, the one in 1903, the other in 1904.

"The consolidation of the schools into one central school," I quote from a report issued by the Board of Education, London, England, "had immediately a marked effect on enrolment, on attendance and on the age at which pupils left. In Middleton in the first term the average daily attendance rose from 54 per cent. to 78 per cent., and in Kingston from 44 per cent. to 91 per cent. Even in the abnormally severe winter of 1904-5, when snow lay deep on the ground for months and the thermometer was often forty degrees below zero, Kingston school was only twice closed and in no case did attendance fall below 50 per cent. In Kingston the enrolment rose from 125 to 166, an increase partly accounted for by the ardor of districts not included in the scheme, since twenty pupils from outlying districts were willing to board in the neighborhood, walk a great distance, or otherwise convey themselves, in order to attend the new school. Moreover, many older pupils returned to school, and among them seven young men and women between twenty and thirty years of age. No clearer evidence of the enthusiasm of the Kingston folk could be furnished than the sight of these grown-up people marching in file with children and seated as pupils in children's desks."



MODEL SCHOOL BOYS AT MANUAL TRAINING



QUEEN'S VALLEY SCHOOL

The same enthusiasm characterized the work at Hillsborough, P.E.I., and at Guelph, Ontario, as long as Sir William Macdonald paid the bills. At Hillsborough the enrolment rose from 148 to 161, the average attendance from 60 per cent. to 74 per cent. At Guelph there was a corresponding increase in both enrolment and attendance.

In every case good teachers were employed and good salaries were paid. A successful attempt was made to enrich the curriculum. Nature study and manual training were provided for; each school had an excellent garden. The senior boys were instructed in scientific agriculture, the girls received training in sewing and cooking and several grades of high school work were put on in each school.

In Eastern Canada the movement has not progressed very rapidly. In Nova Scotia twenty-two districts have some form of consolidation. Four districts are in successful operation in New Brunswick. The superintendent of Prince Edward Island is not hopeful, because consolidation means increased expenditure for school purposes. Little progress has been made in Ontario for the same reason. People see the advantages, but the tax bill bulks big, and all sorts of objections are forthcoming.

Some progress has been made in Manitoba. Seven years ago the idea was first mooted, only to meet with a storm of ridicule. It was preposterous. It was all right for a warm country, but the children would freeze to death in vans. Population was too sparse. Educators, the most conservative of men, looked in mild-eyed amazement on the idea. It was first adopted in Virden in 1905, largely through the instrumentality of the late Hon. J. H. Agnew and Col. E. A. C. Hosmer. The pupils from an adjacent rural district were transported to the town, and soon the teachers reported that they were the most regular attendants. Holland followed suit, and there the attendance in the whole district rose from 51 per cent. to 76 per cent., and in 1909 Mr. Ross, the chairman of the board, was able to report that every child of school age in the district was enrolled on the registers.

During the past five years public sentiment has undergone a complete change. The demand for information on the subject became so great that in the spring of 1909 the writer was drafted from his inspec-torial division in order to give his whole time to the work. Meetings have been held in nearly every part of the Province, and in nearly every case were well attended by men and women, who appeared to take a keen interest in the questions under discussion.

Besides Virden and Holland, the pioneer schools in the movement, children are being transported in the districts of Melita, Dauphin, Eagleton and St. Patrick. Consolidation has also been effected at Miniota, Elphinstone, Starbuck, Sperling, Teulon, Sulphur Creek, Brigden, Gilbert Plains and Snowflake. In these districts transportation is being arranged, and in some cases buildings are being erected. At Starbuck a ten-acre site has been procured, and at Sperling a five-acre site, and it is the intention of the trustees to erect modern four-roomed buildings.

But progress along this line must necessarily be slow. The people must be educated. A campaign of publicity must be carried on. The advantages must be made apparent to all, and this takes time. Here we have no Macdonald mamma to assist us. We must depend solely upon our people. Perhaps it might not be out of place to state briefly, as I have found them, the advantages of the scheme.

Wherever it has been tried, consolidation has meant the employing of better teachers. Good teachers gravitate towards larger schools. Under present conditions a teacher is willing to do harder work in a graded school for a lower salary than she can earn in a rural school; for the larger school brings companionship, and none but the young teacher knows the utter loneliness of the school house after four o'clock. The larger life of the bigger school makes it possible to retain these teachers for longer periods of time. How many trustees stop to count the cost of changing teachers? What bank, what railway, what business concern could succeed if the management were changed every six months or year? It is true that in these institutions property interests are concerned, and it is worth while to pay for their protection; but the interests of even the children should be worth some consideration.

Then the number of teachers makes possible some degree of specialization. In some districts it is the custom to ask the overworked teacher to do third class work, because some school-compelling trustee or rate-payer does not wish to incur the expense of sending his daughter away. The work is done, but it is done at the expense of the children in the lower grades. If graft is the exploiting of the many for the benefit of the few, then the teaching of third class work in the average rural school comes under this heading, and the graft is not the less mean because those who suffer are helpless children. The duty of the elementary school is to the lower grade. There are a few cases where senior work can be done in a one-roomed school, but these cases are exceptions to the rule. Some provision, however, should be made for the older pupils. To say this is merely to state one phase of the proposition that the country child is entitled to just as good an education as the child in town or city. From the standpoint of the teacher, the years from twelve to sixteen, the years of adolescence, are very precious. This is the time of greatest development, and the graded consolidated school is able to provide a specialist for junior grades and a capable, competent teacher for the seniors. There are advantages for all; none labors under a disability.

The central school is a bigger school. It is worth while to care for it properly. A great deal of time is lost in country schools on winter mornings; frequently it is half-past ten or eleven o'clock before the children can really get down to work, and even then the floor is freezing cold. The larger school, with a regularly employed caretaker, eliminates this waste. Consolidation means better equipment at less cost, for needless duplication of maps, charts, globes and library books is avoided.

But the chief advantage to be derived from the introduction of the system is not the specialization which it makes possible, with a primary teacher for the junior grades and a first-class professional who can de-

vote his whole time to the seniors; it is not the better educational plant with comfortable and hygienic surroundings for the children; but it is to be found in the fact—a fact borne out wherever children are transported to and from the school—that the attendance is greatly increased and is very much more regular. Mention has already been made of the notable improvement in this regard in the case of the Macdonald schools. These instances might be multiplied.

The pupils of Maple school district are transported to Gladstone school. Below is given a summary of enrolment and attendance during the year 1909:

One wonders how many schools, rural or urban, can show a record nearly as good. It is worth while noting the average during the months of December, January, February and March.

Last February the trustees of McKinley school district made a bargain with the school board of Brigden, the adjoining district. Brigden school was to be kept in operation. The children from McKinley district were to be transported to and from the Brigden school in a van purchased for the purpose. In November I visited the districts with Inspector Campbell. We compared the registers, which showed the following statement:

Brigden S.D. McKinley S.D.

No transportation; pupils attending the home school.	Transportation; pupils taken from their homes to school in adjoining district.
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	Enrolled	Average		Enrolled	Average
March	14 . . .	11.39		10 . . .	9.43
April			School closed most of the month, teacher sick.		
May	12 . . .	7.00		12 . . .	10.37
June	14 . . .	6.9		12 . . .	9.45
August	8 . . .	5.47		9 . . .	8.23
September	10 . . .	3.78		9 . . .	8.76
October	12 . . .	4.58		12 . . .	9.97

The van driver and the teacher reported that any falling off in the McKinley attendance was due to illness.

These instances might be multiplied, and each tells the same story. Transportation means a 50 per cent. increase in school efficiency from the attendance standpoint alone. There are other minor advantages

to be noted, such as the establishing of rural mail delivery—the children get the family mail at noon and take it home with them at night, the consequent rise in land values and the resulting movement for better roads, but the three chief benefits should be pondered.

A report from the trustees of the St. Patrick consolidated school, compiled by Mr. Lucien Guillot, showing the working of the system in a purely rural district, is appended.

Of course there are drawbacks to be considered. Our winters are long and cold. The roads are often none too good. The taxes will be raised. Of these, the last is the greatest, and it translates itself into many and various objections, but the movement will grow. There are at least one hundred localities in the Province where consolidation is at the present time eminently feasible and desirable, and with increase of population many more points will be available. Country life will, in the future, be greatly enriched and enlarged. The farmers of Manitoba are coming into their own, and in equipping their children for a wider larger life, the consolidated school will play no unimportant part.

In concluding this, my last report to the Department, I wish to thank the various inspectors for their very cordial co-operation in a somewhat uphill task, the Deputy-Minister for his kindly assistance and unfailing courtesy, and yourself for the hearty sympathy which you have always shown towards the work, and the time and energy which you have ever been ready and willing to spend in carrying on that campaign of publicity upon which the success of the movement depends.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES K. NEWCOMBE.



CHILDREN OF ELGIN S.D. PREPARING A MEAL FROM THE SCHOOL GARDEN



Starbuck Consolidated School

The new consolidated school at Starbuck was formally opened on Friday, the 18th instant, by the Hon. G. R. Coldwell, Minister of Education. This district comprises some $59\frac{1}{2}$ sections of land, and includes also the Village of Starbuck. Twenty-five dollars an acre is considered a fair average value for the lands in the district, and they are assessed at \$4.00 an acre, the total assessment being \$165,300.

Debentures have been issued for \$12,000, and a fine new solid brick school on a stone foundation has been erected at a cost of \$15,300; this amount does not include anything for furnishing. The building contains four rooms and a basement, a science laboratory and library, and is heated and ventilated by the Pease, Waldon hot air system, which cost \$1,000. Provision has been made for indoor closets, and a

pump has been placed in both the boys' and girls' playrooms in the basement. Sanitary bubbling fountains are to be attached to the pumps, and the finest of well water has been secured.

The present school population between the ages of six and eighteen years is 115, and the present enrolment is eighty. Of this number fifty-five are transported to the school. One van travels four and a half miles and brings twenty-two children, at a cost of \$2.75 per day, and another travels four and a half miles and brings seventeen children, most of whom are in the principal's room, at a cost of \$2.95 per day. One travels six miles and brings eleven children, and another two miles, bringing five children. These two are run on a mileage basis at present. The vans travel along the road nearest to the children's residences. They cost \$170 each. They have yet to be provided with sleigh runners, which will be an extra charge.

There are eight students studying third class teachers' certificate work, and six studying for entrance to the high schools, all of whom come from the country. Starbuck is an excellent example of what may be accomplished by any rural community that really values the education of its children. The special tax in the district this year is \$10.80 per quarter section. It is possible the district may have to issue more debentures for a small amount to finish everything and to put its finances in good shape.

The trustees of the district are Mr. Robert Houston, Mr. A. Meakin and Mr. C. O. Stenberg. This number will be increased to five at the annual meeting in December. Great credit is due the board, and particularly their energetic secretary, Mr. Robert Houston, for what has been accomplished.

DAUPHIN, April 21st, 1910.

ROBERT FLETCHER, Esq.,

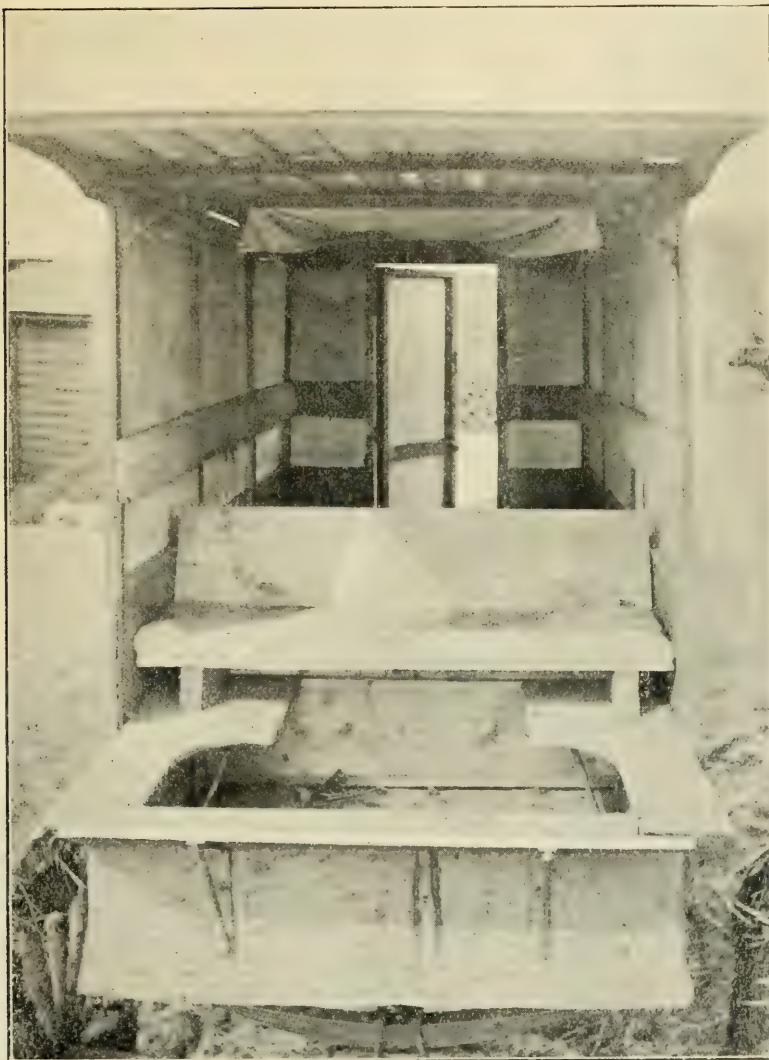
Deputy Minister of Education, Winnipeg.

Dear Sir,—In reply to yours of April 14th, inquiring about the working of the Dauphin consolidated schools since Vermillion school district became part of that district. Since coming into force January, 1909, it has, on the whole, given good satisfaction, and although there were some little difficulties to overcome, I am satisfied that the rate-payers would not like to return to the old system.

We have two van-routes, the one on the west side covering about

nine miles coming to school and is paid \$3.90 per trip, and takes about two hours to do it.

The other van covers about eight miles and takes about the same time, and is paid \$3 per trip.



A DAUPHIN SCHOOL VAN

One van is carrying at present twenty-one children and the other fifteen, the former being overcrowded.

We have had some trouble on one of the routes in getting a reliable driver, and the teams have been too light for the work. One van never

missed a day during the first year, and very few days were missed on account of cold weather, but a few have been missed on account of muddy roads. The children enjoy it, and prefer it to the old way of getting to school.

Teams, to be able for that work, on all kinds of roads, should weigh at least 2,500 lbs. I am unable to say at present how much more it costs us, but we are satisfied that we are getting good value for the money, as the children learn so much better.

During the last year that Vermillion school was open, the average attendance was ten, and at present the vans are carrying thirty-five, but the average for the past six months was less than that.

Children take more interest in their work and seem more anxious to go to school, and when one considers the magnificent schools and equipment that we have in Dauphin, it is not to be wondered at.

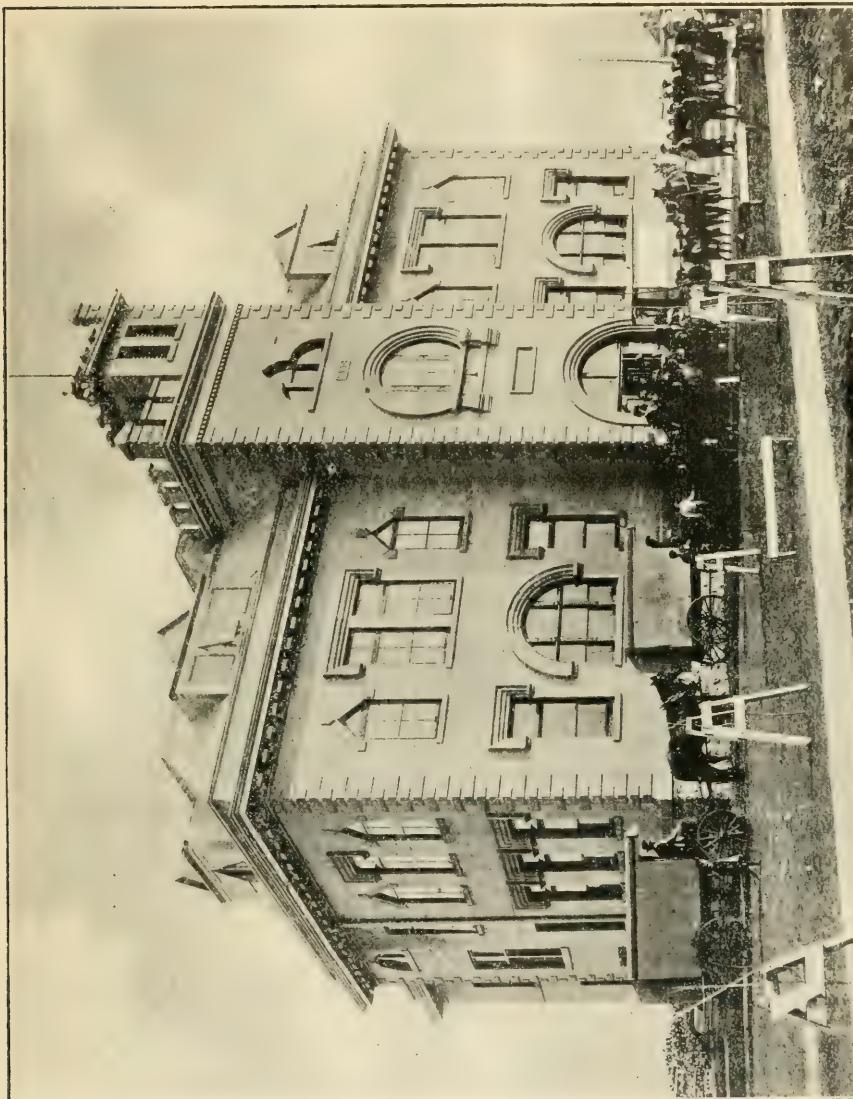
If there are any drawbacks to consolidated schools, I do not know what they are. As regards transportation, it is merely a question of dollars and cents and good average roads.

Yours very sincerely,

G. STRANG.



DOBBYN S.D. IS CONSOLIDATED WITH MELITA



ONE OF DAUPHIN'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS—A CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT

TILSTON, May 14th, 1910.

R. FLETCHER, Esq.,

Deputy Minister of Education, Winnipeg.

Dear Sir.—Yours to hand re cost of transportation in Eagleton school, district No. 1437. Last year we paid each van \$2.00 per day, but had only two running for a while.

This year our three vans are each costing us \$2.25 per day. Two of them are driven by large boys attending school. They each travel about ten miles, five each way. The other van is driven by a liveryman here, five and a half miles each way, but as he has to go out for the children, he has to travel twenty-two miles per day for \$2.25, and we probably will soon have to pay more. We expect that in a couple of years the cost will be much greater, as we shall have to put on more vans. We believe the children attend more regularly than in the ordinary rural school.

Hoping I have given the particulars you desire, I remain,

Yours, etc.,

R. W. JAMES,

Secretary-Treasurer.

— — —

MINOTIA, April 24th, 1910.

R. FLETCHER, Esq.,

Deputy Minister of Education, Winnipeg.

Dear Sir,—I must apologise for not answering yours of the 4th inst. sooner, but I have been on the sick list for quite a while and have not felt like doing anything. With regard to the working of the consolidated scheme in our district, I must say that without a single exception all the ratepayers are more than satisfied with it, and consider it the only way for educating little ones from the rural districts. We started our van just at a time when it would have been impossible for little ones to have gone even a mile to school unless their parents drove them, owing to the state of the trails; it was just at the break-up, but the van never missed a single trip, and the little ones have not missed a day's schooling since it started. It is a little more expensive actually, but the expense is overbalanced by the extra and regular education, and

not that alone—parents are quite at rest as to the safety of the children, provided, of course, the van-driver is a trustworthy man; and they also know that the children are not going to get their feet and clothes wet if it comes on a rain storm, as is often the case in rural school districts. It also teaches the children to be prompt and punctual, as they knew the driver will not wait for them. I might state that this is not my own opinion of consolidation, but of all the parents in the district who are sending children to school. I heard a comparison a day or two since by one who was at first opposed to the scheme. His words, as near as I can remember, were: "The old rural school is to the new scheme as an old Red river cart is to an up-to-date auto." Not knowing a Red river cart except by hearsay, I presume the rural school and cart both answered their purpose in their day. Trusting this will be of some use to you,

I remain, yours sincerely,

W. E. WARREN,

Trustee Sarahville Consolidated S.D.

VIRDEN, MAN., April 19th, 1910.

HON. G. R. COLDWELL,

Minister of Education, Winnipeg.

Dear Sir,—I have pleasure in responding to your request for a report on the working of consolidation in the school district of Virden, No. 144, and for an expression of opinion by the board, through myself as chairman, on the results that have accrued since it has been brought into operation.

We, along with Holland school district, have the distinction of being the first to take advantage of the Act for Centralization, and our four years' experience enables us to judge of the desirability and feasibility of the scheme. The idea was first suggested early in 1905, and was brought to successful accomplishment in January, 1906. The late Hon. J. H. Agnew, for many years secretary-treasurer of the district, was largely instrumental in having the system adopted and carried into practical effect. The school district as at present constituted comprises the whole of township 10, range 26, except the north half of section 19, the north-west quarter of section 29, and the whole of sections 30, 31 and 32. The Town of Virden, where the school is situated, is fairly centrally located, being composed of section 22, and containing, therefore, as at present incorporated, 640 acres. The Shane district, composed of sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18 and 20, was organized in 1905.

This is the district which consolidated with Virden immediately after organization, and whose school children are daily being transported to and from the Virden school in the Town of Virden on each and every school day throughout the year. Only one van so far has been used for this purpose, except during the month of March in this year, when the exceptionally bad roads necessitated another conveyance, and a three-seated democrat was sent out during the eighteen school days of the month. The van was built in Winnipeg at a cost of \$300, the Government generously defraying this expense, and also making a further grant of \$200 to cover the initial outlay. It has a seating capacity of eighteen children, but this is frequently overtaxed, and as many as twenty-four have been carried in it at one time. The length of the route at present is seven miles, and the direction west and south. Formerly the route covered nine miles, and this will probably have to be resumed very shortly, as new children of school age have moved into the south-western part of the district and are asking for van accommodation. In the winter it has been found prudent and desirable to abandon the van as a conveyance, when runners are necessary, and to use bob-sleighs and a double box, with lots of hay in the bottom and an ample supply of robes. A contract was made with a liveryman when the system was first put into effect in 1906, to supply a team and driver for the two trips, morning and afternoon, at \$2.50 per day, making about \$50 a month. This is still the price paid, and is about as reasonable as could be expected for faithful and efficient service. I think not one day has been missed by the van in any kind of weather since it started to convey the Shane school children to the Virden school; at least, I cannot recall a day when it did not go out, and certainly, if there were any missed, they were very few.

The number of children enrolled in the various grades in the school is twenty-nine, and has been as high as thirty-two. The average attendance for the past three months—and it must be remembered these are winter months and the most severe of the year—was twenty. I have made careful inquiry from Shane residents who would be most likely to know, if any children of school age are not attending, and I cannot learn of more than two or three, and these, I understand, are to start at once.

I am in my fourth year on the board, and on account of being chairman, probably, and also for the reason, perhaps, that I am easily accessible in my office in the centre of the town, most of the grievances and complaints have been made to me personally. I am competent, therefore, to speak with some authority on the running of the machinery and of the amount of lubrication that has been necessary to keep the several parts in smooth condition. There is no doubt there has been some friction, especially regarding transportation, but we have met every grievance in a spirit of fairness, and where possible applied a remedy at once, and I think I can safely say always to the satisfaction of the aggrieved.

In 1905 we purchased a spacious school site of about three acres in a central and desirable location, and erected thereon an eight-roomed

brick school, which it was thought would provide ample accommodation for years to come. Previous to that we were using a four-roomed stone building erected in 1892, and unfortunately very poorly constructed and imperfectly lighted, so that we were obliged to abandon it entirely for school purposes, and it is now rented for a nominal sum for an immigration hall. This building, and also a small one-storey, two-roomed stone school, stand on grounds comprising only a few lots, which are inadequate for a building site such as we are now needing.

Our school population has grown most rapidly in the last five years, for while in 1906 we were able to house all our pupils in the new eight-roomed school, in 1908 we were obliged to open a room in the small stone building above referred to, and in 1909 we had to equip and open the second room there. This took the junior grades, one and two, and we thought would relieve the pressure for years. Now we find we are again confronted with over-crowded rooms, and constantly increasing applications for admission from new pupils. In these circumstances the board has decided to purchase a new site, and to erect a building to be used as a collegiate institute, provided, of course, the ratepayers approve the proposition, as they will be asked to do shortly, when a by-law to issue debentures and borrow the funds is submitted for their vote.

It will be readily seen that the rural portion of the school district in the Municipality of Wallace, including the Shane district now consolidated, has immeasurably better school facilities under the present arrangement than if separated from the town with small ungraded schools of their own. The cost, considering these advantages, does not largely exceed the amount required to maintain rural schools in small districts; and now that the ratepayers have tested the consolidated system, they would not go back to the old order, I believe, on any account.

In conclusion I might express my personal conviction that the success of consolidation will always depend on the efficiency of the transportation service. This is the heavy expense in connection with the system, and frugal or penurious trustees might seriously impair its advantageous operation by too strict a policy of economy. In our own case, I believe we shall have to face a larger expenditure in this connection, especially in the winter time, when the van routes must be shortened if we are to ensure the regular attendance of the children.

I hope to see the consolidated movement take root and flourish throughout the Province, and certainly with the fostering care bestowed by the Department of Education, it should prosper wherever inaugurated. Your own untiring efforts in this direction, and the Deputy Minister's as well, should bear abundant fruit.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY J. PUGH,

Chairman Virden School Board.

HOMewood, Man.

B. J. Hales, Esq.,

Portage la Prairie, Man.

Dear Sir.—I may say that before consolidation the old School District of Brigden, of which I have been a trustee for several years, comprised some fourteen sections of land, which was latterly cut down to twelve sections, with some four to eight children attending the school. This seemed like throwing money away, as teachers had no interest in teaching such a school, and would stay for a short term only, because the attendance was so poor. If the weather was a little bad, there was an excuse for the children to stop at home, and there was no competition for the children at the school.

The McKinley children had no school, as theirs was a new district, formed out of several others, and the trustees proposed to send their children to Brigden School as an experiment to see if it was possible to transport them satisfactorily, before they would decide whether to build or consolidate with us. They transported them for one year, and decided it would work alright. When the year was up we found by the register that the pupils from the McKinley district drawn in vans had an attendance of nearly 95 per cent., where the children from Brigden School who walked to school had an attendance of about 46 per cent. We thought it was a paying proposition for the advancement of the children by drawing them in vans, so we consolidated and intend building a new school in the early summer. There is now no trouble in getting the children to go to school, and there is more competition in the classes. There is no tired feeling when the children come home, no mud or snow to wade through, and the children are able to do their home-work at nights. I am sure it is going to be all right if we all work together to overcome the little difficulties which may arise.

I am, yours truly,

W. J. Woods,

Sec.-Treas., Brigdenly S.D. No. 497, Homewood, Man.

Table giving information regarding conveyance of children in consolidated schools:

District	Original cost of vans	Does district own vans	Are vans heated	No. trips missed during 1910	Distance which it is considered children can be conveyed with satisfaction
Holland	four for \$600.00	Yes	No	0	6 miles
Darlingford . . .	three for 670.00	Yes	No	0	5 or 6 miles
Sperling	complete with sleighs, each 195.00	Yes	No	0	5 miles
Brigdenly	waggon 100.00 sleigh 28.35	Yes	Yes‡	2	6 miles
Elphinstone	300.00	Yes	Yes*	2	10 miles
Brickburn	three for 500.00	Yes	No	**	8 miles
Dauphin	with sleighs, ea 212.50	Yes	No	1	8 miles
Sarahville	with sleighs, ea 155.00	Yes	No	0	9 miles
St. Patrick	250.00	Yes	No	3†	6 or 7 miles

‡Soapstone footwarmers. *Footwarmers. **Not answered. †No. 1 van, 0; No. 2 van, 3.



ELKHORN SCHOOL—SHOWING PARK AT FRONT

Table showing attendance of pupils in consolidated schools
between the ages of 6 and 16 inclusive, and living
one mile or more from school:

District	No. in district	No. enrolled	Average attendance	Percentage of No. in district	Percentage of enrolment	Pupils doing Entrance work		Pupils doing High School work	
						No.	Ages	No.	Ages
Holland . . .	63	63	56	88.8	88.8	3	13, 14, 16	12	1—13 yrs. 1—13 yrs. 6—14 yrs. 3—15 yrs. 2—16 yrs.
Brickburn . . .	57	57	45	78.94	78.94	4	av'ge. 13	6	av'ge. 14
Brigdenly . . .	25	22	20	80	90.09	2		0	
Sarahville . . .	14	13	12.5	90	96.3	1		0	
Darlingford . .	48	47	47	97.9	100	11	1—13 yrs. 5—14 yrs 2—15 yrs 1—16 yrs 2—17 yrs	6	1—12 yrs. 1—13 yrs. 1—15 yrs. 2—16 yrs. 1—19 yrs.
St. Patrick . .	18	18	17.4	95	95	0		0	



SCHOOL GARDEN—ELGIN S.D., NEAR STRATHCLAIR

Table showing length of van routes and cost:

Name of District	Route	Length	No. Childrn	Cost
Darlingford	A	5½ miles	18	\$ 2.25 per day
"	B	4½ miles	11	2.25 per day
"	C	4 miles	7	2.25 per day
Dauphin	A	9 miles	21	3.90 per day
"	B	8 miles	15	3.00 per day
Eagleton	A	5 miles	18	2.25 per day
"	B	5 miles	18	2.25 per day
"	C	5½ miles	18	2.25 per day
Elphinstone	A	8½ miles	8	3.00 per day
"	B	5 miles	11	2.75 per day
Gilbert Plains	A	8 miles	19	2.50 per day
"	B	8 miles	19	2.50 per day
"	C	8 miles	19	2.50 per day
Holland	A	6 miles	17	466.00 per year
"	B	5 miles	22	525.00 per year
"	C	5 miles	12	383.70 per year
"	D	7 miles	20	399.00 per year
McKinley	A	8 miles	20	3.00 per day
Melita	A	8 miles	13	3.00 per day
"	B	8 miles	13	3.00 per day
Sperling	A	6½ miles	12	3.50 per day
"	B	5 miles	19	2.50 per day
"	C	7 miles	18	3.75 per day
Starbuck	A	4½ miles	22	2.75 per day
"	B	4½ miles	17	2.95 per day
"	C	6 miles	11
"	D	2 miles	5
St. Andrews	A	4 miles	25	3.50 per day
St. Patrick	A	3½ miles	7	.97½ "
"	B	6 miles	14	1.80 per day
Teulon	A	3½ miles	8	375.00 per year
"	B	3 miles	8	350.00 per year
"	C	2½ miles	8	300.00 per year
Virden	A	7 miles	24	2.50 per day

NOTE.—Route "C"—Sperling District—will be 2¾ miles after January 1st, 1911.

McKinley will run two vans after January 1st, 1911. At present a number of children are conveyed on mileage basis.

Starbuck operates van routes "C" and "D" on mileage basis at present.

NOTE.—Interesting illustrated articles appeared in "Farmers' Advocate Christmas Number," December, 1910, and in "Nor-West Farmer," July 8th, 1910.



VAN USED IN CAVALIER COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

Heated with stove which costs six dollars. A patent locker prevents accident, even if the van should be overturned. There are no complaints here because of cold. Sold by Marshall Ardean Wells & Co., Duluth, Minn., at about five dollars.

RURAL VEHICLE HEATER

A heater suitable for heating vans for conveying children, and largely used for that purpose in North Dakota, is sold by Janney, Semple, Hill & Co., Minneapolis. It has cast iron linings, grates, front draft plate, top and bottom; heavy sheet steel body, and is furnished with a 22 inch capped pipe. It burns either hard or soft coal.

Diameter	Height	Weight	Price F.O.B. Minn.
No. 575	9 in. . . 17 in. . .	25 lbs.	\$3.25
No. 574	7½ in. . . 14 in. . .	12 lbs.	\$2.40

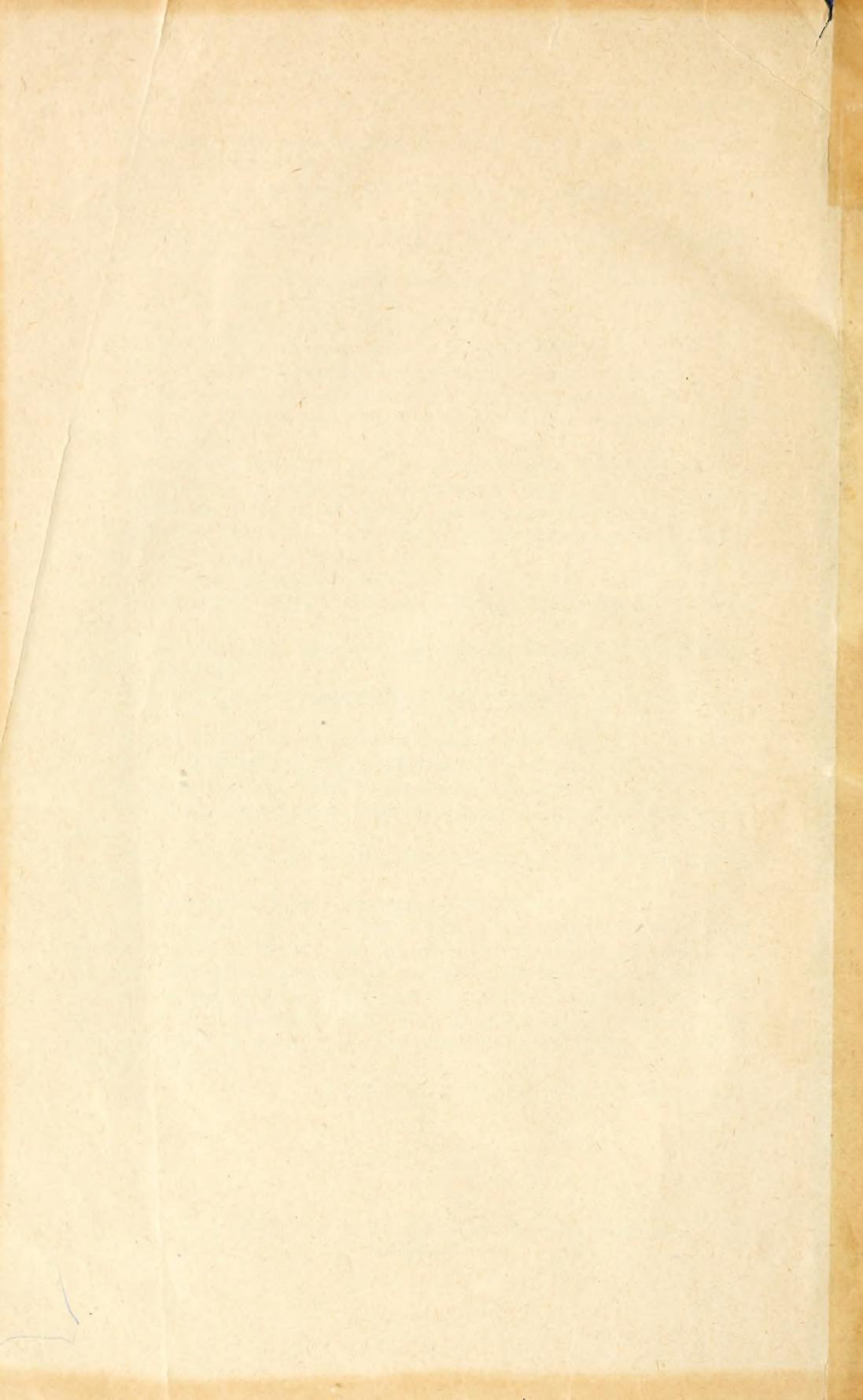
ADVANTAGES OF CONSOLIDATION

In the education section at the Minnesota State Fair this year was a most attractive booth fitted up by the Lewiston consolidated school. This school displayed the following placard, which shows very clearly the opinion held on the matter of consolidation:

- Seeures graded conditions.
- More time for recitations.
- Number of classes per teacher reduced.
- High school work added.
- Insures better attendance.
- Longer terms of school.
- Keeps older boys and girls in school.
- Discipline more easily enforced.
- Course of study enlarged and enriched.
- Special teachers may be employed.
- Keeps the boys on the farm.
- Classes larger and more interesting.
- Widens social life of pupils.
- Better teachers employed.
- Teachers retained longer.
- Better salaries paid.
- Better supervision of work.
- Buildings more comfortably constructed, more comfortable and convenient.
- Better equipment for primary work.
- Better and larger libraries.
- Reduces irregular attendance.
- Eliminates truancy.
- Reduces tardiness to the minimum.
- Health of pupils better preserved because of transportation.
- Morals of pupils protected, controlled going and coming to school.

Increases aggregate cost or gives greater efficiency at the same cost.
 Saves incidental expenses.
 Saves in sending pupils away to school and in moving to town to educate.
 Raises pride, interest and support on the part of the people interested in the school.
 Greater results accomplished in the same length of time.
 Petty jealousies interfere less.
 Course of study made more complete.
 Makes the farm the ideal place to bring up children.
 Healthy rivalry awakened through inspiration in numbers.
 Classes become stronger and pupils continue longer in school.
 The rich and the poor have equal advantages in securing high school education.
 Parents and children more contented with good schools in country.
 School becomes social centre in the community.
 Makes the visitation of superintendents more efficient.
 Enhances the value of real estate, but the greatest gain is enrichment of the lives of the young.
 Better management is secured.
 Better school officials secured by having larger district to select from.
 School games are made more interesting, adding to the attractiveness of school life.
 The only means of realizing free high schools for all and accessible to all.
 Consolidated school secures experienced teachers.
 Close supervision improves efficiency of teachers.
 School gives value received for amount expended.
 Buildings better heated, better ventilated and supplied with apparatus.
 People are brought together more, creating a stronger community feeling.
 Transportation is an advantage, not an objection.
 Accompanying the above was a chart giving a large number of most favorable opinions of the system as given by various patrons within the district. Also photos showed how a small school farm was conducted in connection, and products of the manual training department were displayed. A photo showed the girls' class in cooking and the various farm products raised by the boys at school were put on exhibition, also sewing done by the girls.

—*Nor'-West Farmer, October 20, 1910.*



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Consolidation of rural schools
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